

**The Report of the
Accreditation Visiting Team**

**Cedar Ridge High School
50 North 650 West
Richfield, Utah 84701**

May 11, 2006



**Utah State Office of Education
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Salt Lake City, Utah 84114-4200**

**THE REPORT OF THE
VISITING TEAM REVIEWING**

**Cedar Ridge High School
50 North 650 West
Richfield, Utah 84701**

May 11, 2006

UTAH STATE OFFICE OF EDUCATION

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State Superintendent of Public Instruction**

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FOREWORD

The major purpose of the accreditation process is to stimulate school growth and improvement so as to increase student achievement.

In these efforts, the school staff makes a comprehensive evaluation of the school's programs, operations, and results. The school determines how actual practices align to stated objectives and resulting outcomes. It is a three-phased evaluation: (1) self-evaluation, (2) on-site evaluation by an external team of educators, and (3) implementation using units of the evaluation to improve the school by effecting thoughtful change.

The evaluation, May 11, 2006, was conducted because of the school's desire to ensure quality education for all students in the school, and to increase student achievement.

The entire staff of Cedar Ridge High School is commended for the time and effort devoted to studying and evaluating the various facets of the total program and to preparing the materials used by the visiting team. The excellent leadership given by Principal Stewart Shaver is also commended.

The staff and administration are congratulated for their desire for excellence at Cedar Ridge High School, and also for the professional attitude of all members of the group, which made it possible for them to see areas of weakness and strength and to suggest procedures for bringing about improvements.

While these recommendations may be used to solicit financial support to acquire some of the materials, equipment, and services needed to carry out a more effective program, it is even more important that the faculty and administration utilize them as they continue to evaluate and modify course offerings and administrative and classroom procedures to more dramatically increase student achievement at Cedar Ridge High School.

Patti Harrington, Ed.D.
State Superintendent
of Public Instruction

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CEDAR RIDGE HIGH SCHOOL

Administration and Staff

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Counseling

John R. Pruitt Counselor

Support Staff

Brenda Wilson Secretary

Faculty

Amy Clegg
Rodney Hurd
George Judd
Shanna Sampson

CEDAR RIDGE HIGH SCHOOL

MISSION STATEMENT

Cedar Ridge High School is committed to fostering a unique academic environment promoting individuality, adaptability, self-esteem, and concern for others resulting in lifetime learning by working directly and indirectly to provide help to students who probably wouldn't otherwise graduate with their regular high school peers because of academic or social problems.

BELIEF STATEMENTS

- All students can learn.
- All students have different learning styles and rates.
- All students must take responsibility for their own learning.
- All students should receive frequent feedback regarding their progress.
- All students have the right to a safe, orderly, disciplined school environment.
- All students have the ability to become self-directed learners.
- Learning is a continuous lifelong process.
- Learning should be a positive, sometimes fun, experience.
- Learning is enhanced by effective and creative instruction.
- Learning is enhanced in small class sizes.

CODE OF ETHICS

Respect yourself
Respect others
Respect school
Be on task or
Be somewhere else

MEMBERS OF THE VISITING TEAM

Ralph P. Vander Heide, Ph.D., Consultant in Accreditation, Chair

Judith H. Vander Heide, MS., Consultant in Accreditation

Lisa Lewis, MS, Director of Education, Aspen Ranch School

VISITING TEAM REPORT

CEDAR RIDGE HIGH SCHOOL

CHAPTER 1: SCHOOL PROFILE

Cedar Ridge High School is located in the residential area between Richfield High School and the Navajo Residential Facility. It serves as an alternative school for students from Sevier County's three high schools. In 1989 the school was originally located in a modified double-wide mobile trailer. With increased growth, the building was altered in 1992 and two more double-wide trailers were added. Initially, Cedar Ridge was built to accommodate students who needed remediation, which they gained by earning restored credit so that they could return to their referring school to graduate with their peers. Later Cedar Ridge High School itself became accredited in order to become a diploma-issuing entity. Today, it remains in the same building and serves over 130 students annually with an average student body size of 70+ students and 20+ graduates each year.

a) What significant findings were revealed by the school's analysis of its profile?

The profile section contained information on personnel and teaching assignments. Also included were the 2005-06 course schedule and daily class schedule, which are informative but do not contain detailed descriptive information about the school. There was no in-depth and comprehensive analysis of profile data that described the overall performance of the school.

However, the Visiting Team wish to point out that more profile information was given in the "School Policies" section of the self-study, as well as in the Appendix. These included all school policies, and information such as the annual performance report and results of the 2006 TABE test, the UBSCT, and SSD/Cedar Ridge High School SAT/IYTED results for 2005. Opinion surveys completed by teachers and students were also included.

Brief analyses of the departments were included in the "School Curriculum" section of the self-study. Strengths and limitations were described

Some analysis of the opinion surveys was given. However, the school did not clearly describe strengths and limitations or areas of growth based on collected profile data.

There appears to be no management system in place to continue collecting and updating profile information.

The Visiting Team could not determine what "significant findings" were revealed, since very little "new" information was discovered.

- b) *What modifications to the school profile should the school consider for the future?*

The school needs to put all profile information in the profile section of the self-study and analyze the data in accordance with the guidelines of the NAAS, the state of Utah and the National Study of School Evaluation (NSSE).

Suggested Areas for Further Inquiry:

See above.

CHAPTER 2: THE SELF-STUDY PROCESS

- a) *To what extent has the school community engaged in a collaborative self-study process on behalf of students?*

The self-study effort, as stressed by the school principal, was not greatly collaborative. The self-study was completed mostly by the principal.

The Visiting Team recognizes that at least one faculty member was most uncooperative. The team noted that he keeps the door to his classroom locked. He was grudgingly cooperative with the Visiting Team, but most negative about all aspects of the school. He appeared to believe that only he was correct and said he planned to resign.

- b) *To what extent does the school's self-study accurately reflect the school's current strengths and limitations?*

In spite of the rather haphazard approach to profiling, one does get a picture of the performance of the school and how it operates.

**CHAPTER 3: INSTRUCTIONAL AND ORGANIZATIONAL
EFFECTIVENESS**

Cedar Ridge High School's desired results for student learning (DRSLs) are as follows:

1. Students will demonstrate basic competency in reading, writing and mathematics.

2. Students will demonstrate attributes of dependability, responsibility, integrity, caring, cooperation and teamwork.

There is no indication in the self-study as to the process that was followed to arrive at these DRSLs. The Visiting Team finds nine desired outcomes included in these two listed DRSLs. It is suggested that the school revisit the DRSLs and narrow them down to two or three workable objectives.

Furthermore, interventions, procedures, timelines and more details need to be established.

Shared Vision, Beliefs, Mission, and Goals:

- a) *To what extent did the school facilitate a collaborative process to build a shared vision for the school (mission) that defines a compelling purpose and direction for the school?*

The mission is realistic for this type of school. It defines a compelling purpose and direction. Certainly the principal is dedicated to trying to achieve the objectives it outlines. However, the Visiting Team questions the facilitation of a “collaborative process” in building the mission.

- b) *To what extent has the school defined a set of beliefs that reflect the commitment of the administration and staff to support student achievement and success?*

The beliefs are also realistic for Cedar Ridge High School. Certainly the belief statements address key issues pertinent to effective decision making and policy development. The beliefs are clear and free of jargon.

- c) *To what extent do the school's mission and beliefs align to support the school's desired results for student learning (DRSLs)?*

They are aligned to some extent, but not as indicated in the NSSE manual. *School Improvement: Focusing on Student Performance.*

Curriculum Development:

- a) *To what extent does the staff work collaboratively to ensure the curriculum is based on clearly defined standards and the Utah Core Curriculum (with inclusion of the Utah Life Skills)?*

The principal repeatedly pointed out that greater collaboration among his 3.5 faculty members had to be achieved. It appeared that the Utah Life Skills were included in the curriculum, and the State Core is followed.

- b) *To what extent does the teaching staff work collaboratively to support the development of a curriculum that focuses on the school's desired results for student learning?*

This is unclear, but it appears that the DRSLs are not clearly understood, although doubtless all teachers are working on aspects of the two DRSLs. (See further comments on DRSLs above.)

Quality Instructional Design:

- a) *To what extent does the professional staff design and implement a variety of learning experiences that actively engage students?*

Teachers and students reported that various approaches to learning were used.

- b) *To what extent does the professional staff employ a variety of instructional strategies to ensure the needs of different learners are met?*

Teachers said that they try to meet individual needs using a variety of instructional strategies.

- c) *To what extent do the professional staff and leadership provide additional opportunities which support student learning?*

The Visiting Team could not determine this.

Quality Assessment Systems:

- a) *To what extent has the staff developed classroom or school-wide assessments based on clearly articulated expectations for student achievement?*

Assessments appear to be coordinated with expectations and reflect the intended purpose and performance standards. They are designed and used in a fair and equitable manner.

Leadership for School Improvement:

- a) *To what extent does the school leadership promote quality instruction by fostering an academic learning climate and actively supporting teaching and learning?*

The leadership fosters a climate that supports teaching and learning. However, the principal has found it most difficult to gain complete support from all teachers. It

was reported to the Visiting Team that one most uncooperative teacher is resigning.

- b) *To what extent does the school leadership employ effective decision making that is data-driven, research-based, and collaborative?*

The leadership is commended for making decisions concerning the school that are based on research and the needs of students. The principal is also commended for demonstrating a concern for each students and making efforts to meet the needs of each.

The Visiting Team notes that the principal teaches and is assigned other duties that, in larger schools, are assigned to other persons. Multitasking is part of his job.

- c) *To what extent does the school leadership monitor progress in student achievement and instructional effectiveness through a comprehensive assessment system and continuous reflection?*

This is accomplished in this small school.

- d) *To what extent does the school leadership provide skillful stewardship by ensuring management of the organization, operations, and resources of the school for a safe, efficient, and effective learning environment?*

The principal accomplishes the above.

- e) *To what extent does the school leadership make decisions related to the allocation and use of resources which align with the school goals, the achievement of the DRSLs, and school improvement efforts?*

Resources appear to be effectively allocated according to teaching/learning needs. See comments on DRSLs elsewhere in this report.

- f) *To what extent does the school leadership empower the school community and encourage commitment, participation, collaboration, and shared responsibility for student learning?*

This needs improvement. However, the Visiting Team notes that the involvement of the school community is encouraged.

Community Building:

- a) *To what extent does the school foster community building and working relationships within the school?*

Community building needs to be improved.

- b) *To what extent does the school extend the school community through collaborative networks that support student learning?*

This is not accomplished to a great extent.

Culture of Continuous Improvement and Learning:

- a) *To what extent does the school build skills and the capacity for improvement through comprehensive and ongoing professional development programs focused on the school's goals for improvement?*

Teachers would like more in-service training.

- b) *To what extent does the school create conditions that support productive change and continuous improvement?*

It was reported to the Visiting Team that the school supports continuous improvement.

CHAPTER 4: NORTHWEST ASSOCIATION OF ACCREDITED SCHOOLS (NAAS) STANDARDS I-XI

Standard I – Educational Program

The program of studies meets the requirements of the state.

Standard II – Student Personnel Services

All three sections of this standard are partially met. Personnel services are designed to give assistance to students as called for in the subsections of the requirements. The assigned personnel for guidance includes a minimum of one full-time person for each 400 students enrolled. The primary objective of the counseling program is to promote and enhance the academic and personal development of students and to prepare them for post-high school experiences. However, the students attending Cedar Ridge High School are in need of special counseling, which they are not receiving.

Standard III – School Plant and Equipment

This standard is partially met. The school plant provides for a variety of instructional activities. However, it is small and in need of improvement. The building is adequate, but does not incorporate aesthetic features that contribute to a positive educational atmosphere. Nor does it provide in the best way for the health and safety of students and all school faculty and personnel.

Standard IV – Library Media Program

The school partially meets this standard. A better library needs to be built. The Visiting Team notes that students use other libraries in the area. There is no certified librarian at this small school.

Standard V – Records

This standard is met. Student records are maintained, handled and protected in the best interests of students and parents. Students and parents have the right to access personal student records and are ensured the privacy of such, as guaranteed by federal legislation.

Standard VI – School Improvement (This is not addressed in the self-study.)

The five sections of this standard are met according to the school's annual report. However, the self-study did not include an improvement plan based on the DRSLs.

Standard VII – Preparation of Personnel

Professional personnel are in compliance with the licensing requirements of the state of Utah and are endorsed or properly, temporarily exempted for the subjects they are teaching.

Standard VIII – Administration

This standard is met. The administration of Cedar Ridge High School provides educational leadership, supervises and coordinates programs, and carries out the necessary and required administrative procedures.

Standard IX – Teacher Load

This standard is met. The total number of students instructed by any one teacher in any one grading period does not exceed numbers set by the Utah State Office of Education and/or NAAS. Yet, the Visiting Team learned that teachers would like one more teacher in order to better teach the various subjects.

Standard X – Activities

This standard is met. It was report that the school supports activities that supplement and augment the basic instructional program by providing additional enriching experiences for students consistent with the school’s mission and beliefs.

Standard XI – Business Practices

This standard is met. The school is financially responsible as required by the school district and the state. Proper budgetary procedures and generally accepted accounting principles are followed for all school funds. The school’s advertising and promotional literature are completely truthful and ethical.

CHAPTER 5: SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT EFFORTS – ACTION PLAN

- a) *To what extent is the school-wide action plan adequate in addressing the critical areas for follow-up?*

The self-study did not include an action plan based on the DRSLs.

- b) *To what extent is there sufficient commitment to the action plan, school-wide and system-wide?*

See above.

- c) *How sound does the follow-up process that the school intends to use for monitoring the accomplishments of the school wide action plan appear to be?*

See above.

CHAPTER 6: MAJOR COMMENDATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE VISITING TEAM

The Visiting Team evaluated Cedar Ridge High School on May 11, 2006. Because the Visiting Team found that the school’s self-study was not complete, the school was given an extension until July 1 to finish the report according to the guidelines of the Utah State Office of Education and NSSE. The Visiting Team stressed the importance of including a detailed improvement plan and a profile that would truly give the “big picture” about the performance of the school.

The reworked and updated report was finished and sent to the Utah State Office of Education the in last week of June 2006.

In reevaluating the report, the Visiting Team notes that some items are still not complete and that the “Utah format” has not been followed.

Therefore, the Visiting Team recommends that an accreditation term of **one year** be granted to allow the school to properly prepare a **collaborative self-study** completed in the manner recommended by the state, which must include an improvement plan based on the DRSLs. At the end of that time a Visiting Team would again evaluate the school.

The Visiting Team reminds the school to strictly follow the guidelines of the National Study of School Evaluation (NSSE) and the NSSE handbook, *School Improvement: Focusing on Student Performance* as well as the Utah accreditation handbook, *Collaborating for Student Achievement*.

The school should follow the following steps:

- Profile
- Beliefs and Mission
- Defining the Desired Results for Student Learning
- Analyzing Instructional and Organizational Effectiveness
- Developing the Action Plan
- Implementing the Plan and Documenting Results

Recommendations are given throughout this report.

The school is reminded that accreditation provides reasonable assurance about the quality of opportunities available to students who attend the school. A primary purpose of accreditation is to protect the public trust. Accreditation promotes voluntary self-regulation. It is a means of showing confidence in a school’s performance, i.e., that both quantitative and qualitative standards have been established. An ultimate objective of the self-study and accreditation process should be that schools institutionalize the process of reflective inquiry and thereby become internally responsible for the maintenance of standards—even the creation of standards.